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THE FIRST RANK IN THE ARMY.

It is an ensign who carries a flag.

Pictorial Alphabet.

A fool and his money, &c.

Old proverb.

AN Ensign is a weak-minded individual, who pays £450 for the privilege of wearing a red coat—a distinction enjoyed by a postman at a much cheaper rate. Like a mackerel, the silly youth is attracted by a bit of scarlet cloth; and, like that delicious and infatuated fish, he very often pays for his love of finery with his life. On the above-mentioned little sum being deposited by Green senior in the hands of Messrs Box & Co., the well-known army-agents of Braig's Buildings, the name of Green junior appears in the *Gazette*; and from that moment, as if by magic, the sow's ear is converted into a silk purse, and the young hobbledohoy ceases to be a 'gent,' and becomes, on the authority of the War Department, 'an officer and a gentleman.'

His duty, as we are informed above, is to carry a flag—on a windy day, a most trying and undignified task, requiring the temper of a bishop with the strength of a coal-heaver, and calculated to impress the most unprejudiced spectator with the idea that the standard-bearer is suffering from the effects of strong drink. To qualify himself for this misconception, the ensign must have received an education that has emptied the paternal porte-monnaie to the extent of eighty or a hundred guineas per annum ever since he stepped out of his frocks and attained to the dignity of a jacket and trousers, and must have undergone, at Sandhurst, before obtaining his commission, a severe course of puzzling and pounding by professors, and pinching and poking by physicians, to ascertain whether he is the proprietor of a *mens sana in corpore sano*, and is morally and physically a 'fit and proper person' to serve in Her Majesty's army.

Having passed this Rubicon, one more pull at the parental purse-strings is necessary before the youthful hero can be fairly started on the road to fame. The little bills for his sword, his iron bedstead, and the few other simple articles constituting a military outfit, will extract another hundred and fifty from the governor's strong-box; and then, regularly launched and rigged, Green junior has nothing to do but go where glory waits him, whether it be in the shape of bullets, bayonets, batteries, or bomb-shells.

To enable him to support his exalted rank with becoming dignity, the ensign is presented daily, by a grateful country, with the sum of 5s. 3d., out of which munificent stipend the authorities, with a praiseworthy

regard for his comfort and respectability, oblige him to pay half-a-crown for his dinner whether he eats it or not, and expect him to live like a gentleman on the odd two-and-nine. This feat becomes perfectly easy when we know that an ensign's breakfast is generally supposed in 'military circles' to consist of 'a stiff stock and a glass of water'—proving the truth of the adage, that there is 'nothing like leather;' and that it is asserted on equally good authority, that 'a sneeze and go to bed' constitutes his light and wholesome supper; consequently, after satisfying the usually moderate demands of washerwomen, tailors, hatters, shoemakers, linen-drappers, servants, *et hoc genus omne*, and paying his regimental subscriptions and other small matters, the young millionaire has all the rest to spend on himself. We must make the trifling exception, however, of the first two months of his service, during which he gets very little pocket-money, seeing that the whole of his pay for that period is forcibly deducted, on the authority of the 'Queen's regulations,' and somewhat inconsistently termed a *donation* to the mess and band funds.

Little does the unsuspecting victim of 'scarlet fever' and misplaced confidence know what a preliminary purgatory he has to go through before he enters the paradise of his imagination, and bursts out in all the glory of a full-blown ensign. On joining his regiment, he is handed over by an unfeeling adjutant to the tender mercies of a remorseless sergeant-major, a kind of military Grand Inquisitor, who, assisted by familiars in the guise of drill-sergeants and corporals, forthwith subjects the unhappy youth to a series of cruel tortures, that would extort pity from the heart even of a Madras collector! He is barbarously roused out of his warm bed at six in the morning, and turned, shivering in a thin shell-jacket, on to a cold damp parade-ground. He is herded with a batch of lately caught ploughboys, called a squad, and his body placed in all sorts of uncomfortable positions by a rigid non-commissioned officer, who has the drill-book off by heart, but is painfully deficient on points of grammar.

He is instructed by this ramrod in regimentals, that to occupy the 'position of a soldier,' he is not to stand 'bolt hupright like a aystack,' but to 'lean well forward,' with his 'ed hup, shoulders square, stomach hin, palm of the and to the front, little finger touching the seam of the trouser, feet at a hangle of forty-five degrees, cels together, and the weight of the body on the flat of the fult.' Wishing to conciliate his fierce-looking preceptor, the trembling novice too eagerly attempts to comply with this exasperating formula, and tumbles on his nose. 'That's not the position of a soldier,' says Corporal Poker triumphantly, picking

up his unfortunate pupil. 'Hif you ad hattended to my hinstuctions, sir, you would not ave soiled your pantaloons.'

With a view of opening his chest, and giving him that graceful hollow in the back so essential to a perfect military carriage, the ensign is put through a course of gymnastic evolutions that would prostrate the most muscular street-acrobat that ever converted himself into a human frog by tying his legs in a knot round his neck. In the course of these calisthenic exercises, he is made to clap his hands insanely before his nose, with his arms extended like a sign-post, and then to force them violently behind his back till his shoulder-blades crack again. He has next to become an animated wind-mill, and whirl his clenched fists frantically round his head, till his arms are loose in their sockets; and, finally, if of a stout habit of body, he is brought to the very verge of apoplexy, by vainly attempting, at the command of his tormentor, to perform the impossible feat of touching his toes with his fingers without bending his knees. Panting with this exertion, which has fractured his dress in a most inconvenient manner in several places, he is permitted to 'stand at ease' for a short time and look about him; but before he has recovered his breath, he is nearly lifted off his legs by the word 'attention,' barked sharply out and pronounced 'shun' by the Ramrod, and forthwith put through his 'facings.' He is told that at the word 'right about face' he is not to 'face,' but merely to 'place the ball of the right toe against the eel of the left futt, and remain stiddy.' At the word 'tow' he is to 'face about,' and at the word 'three' bring his 'eels together with a tell.' Poker insists upon the 'tell,' and if the dozen pair of Bluchers in his squad don't come together at exactly the same moment, and with a noise like thunder, he savagely gives the word 'has you were,' and begins again.

Having been twisted round to all the points of the compass, till he is quite giddy, and his intellect completely muddled with the intricacies of 'left about three quarters,' 'right half,' and *vice versa*, the bewildered candidate for a 'peacage or Westminster Abbey,' is next initiated into the mysteries of the 'goose step'—a ridiculous performance, which consists in his standing for an indefinite period on one leg, with the other poised in the air, and waving the suspended limb gracefully backwards and forwards with depressed 'eel' and 'pinted' toe to the words 'front' and 'rare' of the ungrammatical Poker.

Should the victim's attention wander for a moment during this absurd exhibition, the lynx-eyed sergeant-major is heard shouting from one end of the parade in stentorian tones: 'No. 13's not looking to his front!' and if, in his agitation at this unlooked-for check, the nervous recruit should unconsciously get the strap of his forage-cap into his mouth, the adjutant, equally sharp-sighted, screams, in piercing accents, from the other end: 'You needn't devour your chin-strap in that ravenous way, Mr Green; you'll get your breakfast presently.' Totally upset, both mentally and bodily, by this double-barrelled attack, the wretched tyro loses his presence of mind, totters, both feet come to the ground, and he is ignominiously packed off to the 'awkward squad,' a collection of all the impracticable muffs and incorrigible 'bad bargains' in the regiment.

Three times a day for weeks and months has the

future Wellington to undergo this process of slow torture, which constitutes his military education, during which time he gets over hundreds of miles of gravel, and wears out dozens of pairs of boots, in his attempts to master the difficulties of marching, counter-marching, wheeling, doubling, charging, and forming square. His knuckles are barked in the 'manual and platoon,' his knees are excoriated in 'resisting cavalry,' and he is beaten black and blue in the sword-exercise. When, at length, he can step the regulated pace, in the legitimate time, without varying the hundredth part of an inch in the thousandth part of a second—when he can handle a heavy musket as easily as he would a popgun—when he has overcome his natural propensity to look round if his curiosity is excited, to rub any part of his person afflicted with temporary irritation, to laugh when he is amazed, and cry oh! when he is hurt—when, in fact, he has learned to become a mere automaton without will or motion, except at the command of his drill instructor, he is reported fit for duty, and his persecution ceases. On the recommendation of the adjutant, a board of fat majors is appointed to sit upon him; and if he goes through his various performances to their satisfaction, he is dismissed drill. A tip of a sovereign assuages the grief of the grim Poker at parting with his disciple; and the emancipated novice, throwing away his leading-strings, is permitted for the first time to join the general parade, and share in all the privileges and immunities of an officer holding the 'first rank in the army!'

He then becomes a tremendous fellow! Stalwart grenadiers fly at his bidding; the great sergeant-major himself is obedient to his nod, and in a moment of unparalleled audacity he has even been known to 'chaff' the adjutant! His military career has fairly commenced; and the fortunate ensign, after serving in all parts of the globe, and expending some three or four thousands in purchasing his promotion, may look forward to becoming, in about thirty years, a broken-down old general officer on a pound a day, with perhaps an extra 5s. for distinguished service—provided always he manages, in the meantime, to escape cholera at Calcutta, yellow Jack at Jamaica, frostbites in Canada, assegais at the Cape—mutilation, amputation, starvation, and all the other ills that military flesh is heir to.

Never shall I forget what a young lunatic I became on reading one morning in the *Gazette*: '100th Foot—John Jones, Gent., to be ensign, by purchase, vice Muffin, who retires.' How I blessed Muffin! No words in the vocabulary were strong enough to express my admiration of Muffin's *retiring* disposition. I laughed, cried, sung, danced, and did everything but stand on my head. For the sake of the furniture, I was turned out of the drawing-room, and went raving mad in the kitchen; I shook hands with the butler, kissed the housemaid, hugged the cook, and upset the entire domestic economy of the whole establishment. What a lucky fellow I was, too! the 100th—a crack light-infantry regiment. I was not to be a common 'mudcrusher,' wearily tramping along hard roads to hoarse words of command, but a gay, dashing 'light bob,' scampering merrily over hill and dale to the music of a ringing bugle! How unceasingly I bothered the unfortunate tailor to make haste with my uniform, and what a nuisance I became to all my friends when it did come home. I was never

tired of buttoning myself up in my red coat, and corking a pair of curly moustaches on my innocent upper-lip, to see how I looked with those martial appendages. How ardently I sighed for the reality! and how unmercifully I scraped at my unhappy cheeks, in the hope of encouraging the growth of an invisible whisker! I must have added materially to the incomes of Mr Rowland and the manufacturer of the Rypophagon Shaving-soap in those days. Excepting my sister, who was never tired of hearing of the heroic achievements I intended to perform, and my mother, who had an idea that I was going off to be shot, as a matter of course, what a relief it must have been to the whole circle of my acquaintance when I started to join my regiment. And when I had undergone the introductory gymnastic ordeal, and had escaped from the clutches of the grand inquisitor, what a pleasant, free-and-easy life I found it. My first night at mess, too! I thought I had never seen anything so brilliant and fascinating. My brother-officers were so kind and civil, so anxious to put me at my ease, and so particular in taking wine with me because I was a stranger. How dreadfully tipsy I became in consequence, and what a headache I had next morning! I suppose no one was ever so deliciously soft as I was, or had such a number of hoaxes played upon him. I became sharp, however, in my turn, and played them upon others. What pleasant recollections I have of those early scenes and companions, and how a few short years have changed us all—how the hare has been passed by the tortoise—what blighted hopes and ruined prospects have been the fate of some, and how all the high-flown aspirations of youth have dwindled into the sober matter-of-fact of middle age, and the splendid castle in the air, peopled with rank, wealth, and beauty, been replaced by furnished lodgings and a wife and family!

Of the ensigns who were my contemporaries on joining, Miles Adamant is the only one still in the regiment. He was quite a veteran compared to us, and we used to call him the grandfather of the ensigns. He had been six years in the army; but as he was poor, and poverty being a sort of military crime, he had been passed over several times by juniors not half such good officers, but, fortunately for them, longer purses. It was heart-breaking work for poor Miles, who was enthusiastically fond of his profession, to see boys of a few months' service promoted over his head, not from any merit of their own, but merely because they happened to have rich 'governors.' He had none, poor fellow, his father, who had been a general officer, having died when he was quite young. His mother, by strict economy, had contrived to give him a good education, and when he got his commission, in consideration of his father's services, was able to afford him a small annual allowance. With this he struggled manfully on, and kept himself free from debt till he was appointed adjutant, which gave him his lieutenantancy, and a welcome addition of 5s. a day to his pay. From that time he ceased to be a burden to his mother; and though his means did not permit him to keep pace in many respects with his more fortunate comrades, no one in the regiment was more thoroughly respected and looked up to. If any youngster got into a scrape, he always went to Miles Adamant for advice. He was the referee in all disputes, the peacemaker in every squabble, and in deciding a bet, his opinion was considered more valuable than that of the omniscient editor of *Bell's Life* himself. In about ten years, Miles worked his way up to the top of the lieutenantants, was again passed over by richer men than himself, and at length got his company by a death-vacancy, a couple of years before the Crimean campaign. At the battle of the Alma he distinguished himself by a 'terrific combat' with four Russians, and was honourably mentioned in dispatches. At

Inkermann he was third captain, and all his seniors being placed *hors de combat* in that mortal struggle, he 'won his spurs' by bringing the regiment out of action. He did his work like a man all through that dreadful winter, and escaped without a scratch till the memorable attack on the Redan, when a conical bullet from a Russian rifle, whirling along in search of its predestined billet, effected a lodgment in his hip, and finding its quarters very snug, refused to be ejected. No one supposed he could live with a lump of lead firmly imbedded in the bone, and Miles's name appeared in the ominous list of 'dangerously wounded.' For a long time his life hung upon a thread; the shock to his nervous system had been so great, that even a person moving about his hut caused him excruciating agony; but skilful treatment, however, and a strong constitution, pulled him through; his troublesome visitor became a tenant for life, and with the exception of a perceptible limp, he is now as strong and hearty as ever. He returned the other day from the scene of his glory, as brown as a berry, and covered with honour and hair. He is now a lieutenant-colonel and a C.B., and decorated with a medal, four clasps, the Legion of Honour, and a beard down to his waist! Report says that he is about to be married to a beautiful heiress, who, like *Desdemona*, loves him for the dangers he has passed. Long life to him! No man better deserves his good-fortune.

What a contrast was Rocket! The son of an opulent country gentleman, who allowed him L500 a year, and an unlimited supply of capital to purchase his promotion, no one stood a better chance of rising in his profession. But he was cursed with a love of display, and a wanton spirit of extravagance, that knew no bounds and brooked no control. The old military system of spending half-a-crown out of sixpence a day, was perfect economy compared with the reckless way in which Rocket flung his money about. As soon as he got it, it was subjected to the well-known ornithological process of being converted into 'ducks and drakes.' If he had had L5000 or L50,000 a year, it would have been just the same. In matters of dress and equipage, he brooked no rival near his throne; he would be 'aut Caesar aut nullus;' and if anything novel or strange appeared, his great ambition was, no matter what it cost, to 'cut it out' with something newer and more eccentric. He thought himself a capital judge of horseflesh, and was victimised by all the dealers in the country; he ordered coats by the score, and watches by the dozen; and had more screws than he could ride, more clothes than he could wear, and more jewellery than he could carry. He kept a kind of open house, and was a little king among a set of men who smoked his cigars, rode his horses, and borrowed his money. Three times in five years were his debts paid by his indulgent father; but on the fourth application, a condition was imposed—that he would quit the army and live quietly at home. This proposition, Rocket, now a captain, rejected with scorn, and father and son parted in anger. Left to his own resources, he fell among thieves: the Jews made short work of him; post obits and other diabolical instruments soon failed to supply his still reckless expenditure; and, in an evil hour, he took to gambling. He became totally absorbed in this exciting pursuit; and having a clear head and steady hand, played at first with ruinous success. Intoxicated with his good-fortune, he became more extravagant than ever. In the meantime, his father died unreconciled to his prodigal son, leaving the bulk of his property to a distant relation. Rocket had long since anticipated whatever came to him as a matter of right, and was now totally dependent on his pay, and his winnings at the card-table. Here his good-fortune at length deserted him; his losses were heavy and frequent. In the hopes of retrieving them, he sold his commission. From this point his downward

course was rapid; night after night luck was against him. One fatal evening, maddened with his losses, he grew desperate, and staked his all—his very life depended on the cast. A gleam of fortune seemed to shine upon him once more: one card alone stood between him and certainty. As the game proceeded, his chance grew brighter; the last card only remained to be dealt. With starting eyes he watched it as it fell upon the table—a heavy groan escaped him—it was the card, and Rocket was a beggar. Without a word he hurried from the room, and strode hastily through the streets to his lodgings. On the door being opened, he dashed up stairs to his room, and locked himself in. Alarmed at his master's pale face and haggard look, the servant was on the point of following, when the report of a pistol was heard, succeeded by a heavy fall. The door was burst open, and the unfortunate gambler was discovered extended on the floor, with a bullet through his brain.

How different again was Bubb—'Alderman' Bubb, as we called him, he was so gross a feeder. He would gorge himself like a boa-constrictor, and then fall fast asleep. He was the fattest and most thickheaded officer in the British army. He never brushed his hair, and was supposed to sleep in his clothes. When he attempted to write, he used to ink himself all over, and was known to have spelt 'door' d-o-r-e in an official letter. There was no examination in those days. Money and interest were the only qualifications, and, somehow or other, Bubb had both. Where he came from nobody knew; but he was supposed to be the son of a rich rum-contractor. When pumped as to his pedigree, he did nothing but grin—he seldom did anything else. If, to make him a little lively, he was tossed in a blanket, he went up grinning, and came down grinning—no one seemed to enjoy the fun more than Bubb: he was too heavy, though, to be indulged often, as it took twelve of the strongest subalterns to shake him up effectually. Nothing seemed to rouse him. His face was blackened whenever he went to sleep after dinner, which was regularly every day; his boots were turned into water-jugs, and his shako used as a coal-skuttle. He usually slept in an apple-pie bed, with boot-jacks, cork-screws, fire-irons, and hair-brushes as his bedfellows. He appeared to enjoy his badgering so much, the young fellows soon got tired of 'drawing' him, and he subsided into a regular dummy. He was never dismissed drill; and tears would come into the sergeant-major's eyes when Bubb's name was mentioned. The poor man applied for his discharge soon after, broken-hearted, it is supposed, at not having been able to make anything of Bubb. The whole regiment went into convulsions of laughter when he waddled on to parade for the first time in a tight shell-jacket; and the adjutant, who was the gravest of men, is reported only to have smiled once in his life, and that was when Bubb first attempted the goose step.

Though so great a numskull at drill, the alderman was shrewd enough about money-matters, and kept his pockets tightly buttoned. No extravagant young subaltern could ever extract a sixpence out of Bubb. He was never 'hard up'; and though in the receipt of a private income, he was supposed to have solved the military Gordian-knot, and lived on his pay as an ensign. His washerwoman's appointment must have been a perfect sinecure; and he spent a great portion of his time darning his stockings. He was obliged to pay for his dinner, and made a point of taking his half-a-crown's worth; the messman made nothing by Bubb. He didn't stay long with us—at the end of a year, he was still in the awkward squad, and the colonel hinted that he should be obliged to report him incompetent at the next half-yearly inspection. For the first time in his life, Bubb was struck with an idea. He had mistaken his profession. To the delight of every one, he

sold out, went to Australia, took to sheep-farming, married his cook, and is now one of the richest men in Melbourne.

Another turn of the kaleidoscope—'Gentleman' Brown was the mildest and most affable of little men. His politeness was quite oppressive, and he was supposed to be gifted with some peculiar spinal arrangement that enabled him to bow so gracefully. He was exactly five feet two, and weighed seven stone. When he sat at the end of the mess-table as vice-president, a good-sized round of beef entirely eclipsed him, and nothing could be seen but a large knife and fork apparently carving away by themselves. He was as blind as a bat, and it was quite irritating to see him beaming with smiles, unmercifully hacking away at a fine turkey, while the butler, a perfect artist in culinary anatomy, was gnashing his teeth in mute agony behind the self-satisfied little monster's chair. We used to put placards in front of his dish, inscribed 'Mangling done here,' and the colonel would threaten to make him attend 'carving drill' under the mess-waiter every day in the kitchen; but he never improved, and invariably sent the gravy flying about with a liberality only equalled by the profusion of apologies and lamentations with which he sought to wipe out the stains he had made.

Brown's time was chiefly occupied with his dress. He had thin hay-coloured hair, with an inflamed parting running in an uninterrupted line from the centre of his forehead to the nape of his neck, and his whiskers were tightly twisted into straight little curls like lead-pencils. His linen was a perfect miracle of fineness and getting up, and he was strongly suspected of wearing stays. His hands were as white and soft as a lady's, and his little feet had insteps like bridges. On parade he wore lemon-coloured kid-gloves, and delicate patent-leather boots, instead of the Wellingtons and buckskins used by coarser men. Drill used to distress him very much, and his word of command was like a penny-trumpet. 'Speak out, sir, can't you?' the colonel would roar to him, and Brown, who couldn't manage his r's, would scream: 'Gwenadiers, take ground to the right by thwees—thwees wight shoulders forward—quick march!' and the men, knowing him to be wrong, would quietly correct his mistake themselves, and go in the contrary direction, thereby saving Brown an extra drill perhaps. He was not fond of running; and when a square was formed in a hurry, he was always left outside, and had to creep in under the bayonets. 'Run, sir, will you,' the colonel would bellow; 'what do you mean by dancing along on your toes in that way? If you didn't move smarter than that in action, egad! you'd have your head cut off by a dragoon long before you got into square—although I believe you'd get on just as well without it.' Here Brown would bow and smile pleasantly at his commanding officer. 'Keep steady in the ranks, sir,' the colonel would shout savagely. 'If I see you move a muscle of your countenance, I'll send you to squad-drill for a month.'

Although Brown was as much fitted for a Chancellor of the Exchequer as for a soldier, he was a perfectly harmless little man, and very good-natured. His great failing was a weakness for music at unseasonable hours, and he used to play the flute so mournfully at the dead of night, that it was found necessary, for the peace of the barrack, to plug his instrument with cobbler's wax. When the regiment was ordered to the West Indies, he sold out, and was married by a strong-minded woman, who is dreadfully jealous of him, and has made him the happy father of a numerous family. Thank goodness, under the new regulations, we can have no more Bubbles or Browns in our army.

The stories of the rest of the eight are soon told. Belvidere, the regimental lady-killer, with the help of a faultless figure and unexceptionable whiskers,

successfully assaulted a young widow with large property, and is now a justice of the peace, without the slightest remains of a waist, and colonel of the North-west Hampshire Militia. He has announced his intention of canvassing his county town at an approaching election, and should he succeed, he will enter parliament with a determination, he says, to insist upon a thorough reform in the administration of the army. With this view, he has engaged the services of a celebrated professor of elocution in the person of a retired tragedian, under whose able tuition he is making great progress in the Demosthenic art. His delivery of a contemplated speech, on the Education of Drummer-boys, is, on the authority of the professor, a startling display of oratory, and, to use that gifted gentleman's own words, 'calculated to electrify the House, sir, and have a thrilling effect on the country.'

Little Harkaway, a regular Nimrod, exchanged into cavalry, and was bowled over by a round-shot while charging at the head of his troop at Balaklava, one of the six hundred victims of that fatal misapprehension of orders. He fell gloriously where it had always been his ambition to be while living, 'leading the field.'

Fungus, a quiet steady-going bookworm, went into the church on the death of a brother, and is now rector of Fuddle-cum-stoke, the family living, where he comforts the poor with blankets, and himself with port wine in the most orthodox fashion; and the present writer is a battered old brevet-major, with a pension and a cork-leg, having left his original limb in the middle of a jungle at Chillianwallah. So the world goes round!

CHILDREN'S PLAYTHINGS.

CHILDREN'S playthings! What a crowd of thoughts of the past, present, and future, do these words raise. Pleasant memories of bygone days, and dear associations with the little ones who gather round our old arm-chair, bringing bright hopes for the years yet to come.

Children's playthings! What remembrances arise of the nursery; of favourite dolls, whose faces are still familiar to us as those of former friends; and of tears shed when an anatomical brother dissected the head or took out the eye of a waxen treasure, and made it thenceforth dearer than ever to our idolatrous hearts. Children's playthings! How much we owe them! Who knows what of science, invention, and progress may not be attributable to them! What landmarks of history, fashion, and manners may they not become! A child's toy may hereafter record the triumphs of a Waterloo or the fall of a Sebastopol, as faithfully as the hieroglyphics which whisper the metamorphosis of a Nebuchadnezzar or the victories of a Sesostris. Take the toys of the last century alone, and what a pictorial history of England lies before us: her wars, her discoveries, manufactures, locomotives, machinery, and dress; all are in the hands of our children. Of the antiquity of children's playthings, many records remain; and by these fairy footsteps we may measure the refinement and civilisation of a people. Egypt, which was the cradle of Grecian arts, and the teacher of other countries, has left traces of herself, not only in her mummies, pyramids, and papyrus, but also in her toys. In the Leyden Museum may be found dolls as old as the Hebrew exodus; and the following extract shews how well the nurseries of the Amenophs and Remesees were supplied:—'A young Egyptian child was amused with painted dolls, whose hands and legs, moving on pins, were made to assume various positions by means of strings. Some of these were of

rude form, without legs, or with an imperfect representation of a single arm on one side; some had numerous beads, in imitation of hair hanging from the doubtful place of the head. Others exhibited a nearer approach to the form of a man; and some, made with considerable attention to proportion, were small models of the human figure. Sometimes a man was figured washing, or kneading dough, who was made to work by pulling a string; and a typhonian monster, or a crocodile, amused a child by his grimaces or the motion of his opening mouth.'

If Egypt, then, had her toys, Greece and Rome had theirs too; and as surely as Moses played with his bricks in the palace of Pharaoh, and Agesilaus with his hobbyhorse in the Spartan court, so, we may believe, did Virginia carry her dolls, and Cæsar his mimic car,

All through the bellowing Forum,
And round the Suppliant's Grove,
Up to the everlasting gates
Of Capitoline Jove.

Having thus established so respectable a parentage for our favourites, we will not inquire more curiously into their origin, but return to our reminiscences of the toys of our own day, and revisit the country-fair where we began our acquaintance with our wooden friends. Yes, genteel reader, a country-fair—not as it is now, a sharer in the universal 'move on' of the police, an annoyance rather than an amusement—but such as it was on the village-greens of our fatherland before the Enclosure Act had come into operation. Such fairs still linger on in Normandy; and there, as once it was here, the fair-day is a day much to be observed. We remember, in the simple faith of childhood, using, with a dear sister, the prayer for fair weather from the Book of Common Prayer on the eve of the great day, when a few clouds around the setting sun shook the hopes of the morrow. Happily for our orthodoxy, the day was fine, and a happier party never left a nursery. The road was early thronged, and the sound of penny-trumpets, and the faces expressive of gingerbread, quickened our pace and excited our hopes. What toys we bought!—jacks-in-the-box, watchman's rattles (those were days when it was more fashionable to wake a watchman than to wrench a knocker), tin Wellingtons, Cossacks, and Bluchers, spinning-jennies and industrious cobblers, Noah's Arks closely resembling the extinct animals in the Crystal Palace, with three little wooden figures whom we were accustomed to call Shem, Ham, and Japhet, though always sorely puzzled as to what had become of the remaining five inhabitants of the Ark. Then the dolls—the first doll, we remember, was so like an image of the Virgin we once saw at Antwerp, that in these days it might have carried babes over to Rome; and it would have needed a sight of the Leyden Egyptians to convince good Protestant mammas that 'dollatry' was not the result or the origin of Mariolatry. It was a little wooden figure, with arms akimbo, cut out of a solid piece of wood, of a stiff triangular form, and painted in black and white spots. It found its way quickly to the mouths of little ones; and the wonder is that so many survived the early taste of white-lead which it communicated. Closely following on this Bayeux tapestry doll, came a huge painted log, with arms strongly resembling matches, and with legs so frail and ill fixed, that before three days in its nursery-warfare it was always in the case of Witherington, that hero of Chevy Chase, that man

of doleful dumps,
Who, when his legs were both cut off,
Still fought upon his stumps.

How children ever survived these dolls is a mystery to us. A policeman's staff could scarcely have inflicted

a harder blow; and perhaps it is to this strong feature in their constitution that we are indebted for the introduction of Dutch dolls and of waxen beauties. The Dutch dolls—what treasures they were, with their nicely adjusted joints, and limbs capable of obeying the caprices of the most exacting posture-master; and what ingenuity was called forth in the young professors of anatomy to reset the broken arms and legs. The first wax-doll who made her debut in our nursery was a court-beauty of 1795, wearing the triple plume, out of compliment to the Prince of Wales, who married in that year. Her white muslin and printed calico dress was in the fashion of the day; and the saah which confined her waist floated behind so gracefully as to make our renunciation of pomps and vanities a hard task. She hung from a stall with several sister-beauties, some wearing hats with chimney-pot crowns, some with broad brims, and some with a solitary feather; but all fashionables, all court-dresses, and all suitable companions for the wooden figures of gentlemen who hung beside them in pantaloons and Hessian boots, and who displayed, when jerked, a harlequin agility of legs and arms quite at variance with the gravity of their costume. These court-ladies were costly articles; a year's savings were sometimes required to buy one; and it was reserved for this generation to see their descendants stand in ever-blushing beauty in the London windows, declaring 'We are only fourpence.' What would we not have given for such an announcement from the Duchess of Devonshire or the Princess Charlotte!

The country-fair vanished away, and our toys were replaced by others of a different kind, and we scarcely knew how rapid a progress they had made, till, in the catalogue of the World's Fair for 1851, we read as follows:—'In the North Transept Gallery, Class 29, Case 122, we find a rich display of model wax and rag dolls by Madame Montanari. These playthings are indeed very beautifully modelled, the hair inserted into the head, eyelashes, and eyebrows. They represent the different stages of childhood up to womanhood, and are arranged in the case so as to form interesting family-groups. They include portraits of several of the royal children. The interior of the case represents a model drawing-room, the model furniture being carved and gilt, and elaborately finished. The model rag-dolls, in an adjoining small glass-case, is a newly invented article, largely patronised by connoisseurs in dolls' flesh.'

We had thought, after this, that dolls' flesh could no further go; but the introduction of gutta-percha has given a new element; and crying dolls, walking dolls, and talking dolls, make grandmothers feel that they lived a century too early.

As with dolls, so with other toys, all have made rapid progress, and marked wondrous strides in the world's pace. The clumsy cart has vanished before the exquisitely finished railway-train. The French and English soldiers have given place to the Zouave, who swallows Russians at a mouthful. The wooden-horse on heavy wheels is eclipsed by a steed covered with real horse's skin, which for symmetry of form might have won the prize at the Chelmsford show; and the zoological gardens have refurnished Noah's Ark after the most approved work on natural history. Each toy, in its progress, has meanwhile done its work; it has amused the childish mind, then awakened its curiosity, then stimulated its inventive genius. He, who was scolded by his nurse as a mischievous boy who spoiled his playthings, has become the ingenious mechanic or the skillful engineer; and the fingers which hemmed the doll's robe, have learned their lesson of cheerful industry to be hereafter employed on human dolls. Toys for children, while they are the record of the fashion which passeth away, are also fulfilling a higher destiny: philosophy in sport becomes

science in earnest; for these toys in the hands of our infants are the parents of those great discoveries, those marvellous improvements in arts, manufactures, and commerce, which are, after all, but the playthings of children of a larger growth.

WHAT LUNATIC ASYLUMS REALLY ARE.

In the *Twenty-ninth Annual Report of the Directors of James Murray's Royal Asylum for Lunatics, near Perth*, are given some interesting details as to the modern practice in the treatment of mental disease. We dare say there are other institutions of the same high class where the same facts would appear; but happening to have this Report under our hands, we give a few passages which seem well qualified to dispel the remnants of prejudice on this subject.

'We have observed,' says the writer, 'continued evidence of the unfounded, unjust, and most injurious popular prejudices and ideas, in country districts, regarding asylums and their inmates. Patients have been brought to us tied hand and foot. One young woman, who was perfectly quiet and affable on admission, had been tightly strapped to a window-shutter for several days prior thereto. . . . We have frequently been earnestly requested by the attendants or relatives of patients not to be too severe in the use of the strait-jacket—an instrument of restraint unknown in the institution. On the other hand, we have been gratified to observe the great kindness and attention shewn by old residents to new-comers, who are frequently initiated into all the mysteries of asylum-life, protected from the aggressions of the tyrannical and turbulent, and tended with a care and affection rivaling those of a mother. More especially has this been exhibited in the nursing of the sick and the feeble by individual patients, to whom they stand, for the time being, precisely in the position of afflicted sisters, daughters, or mothers. . . . We would also advert here to the fact, that not unfrequently insane patients voluntarily seclude themselves, temporarily or permanently, within the walls of an asylum. One patient, labouring under suicidal and homicidal melancholia, became an inmate of this asylum at his own express desire; and has since been one of the happiest members of our community. This class of patients would doubtless be increased were the true character of asylums more fully known, and their benefits more thoroughly appreciated. . . .

'We would notice, as a pleasing feature in many of the recoveries, the friendly feeling entertained towards the institution, which has proved to them a "haven of refuge" and "shelter in time of need," as well as towards the companions they have left behind. One gentleman, a most troublesome and suicidal melancholic, has, since his discharge, corresponded regularly with the superintendent and one of his quondam companions, narrating in detail the fishing, shooting, gardening, and reading in which he spends his time. Not only so, but he sent his daughter to visit the asylum, the officers, and various of the inmates whom he specialised, as places and persons associated in his mind with the most pleasing reminiscences. Other discharged patients, living in the neighbourhood, have occasionally visited the officers, privately, or have attended and joined in various of the public amusements. One man comes regularly on Christmas-day to dine with his old companions in confinement. In some patients the attachment to the institution is so strong, as not only to astonish, but annoy their friends. They work cheerfully and efficiently while here, but if removed, they become indolent, obstinate, and unmanageable, until sent back to their adopted home. Such persons have, as members of picnic parties, visited their native districts, and seen their relations, without evincing the slightest disposition to remain with them. . . .

'One of the principal, and, at the same time, pleasing, though frequently most difficult duties of the officers of an asylum, is to discover and multiply new forms of recreation—to maintain a constant but varied succession of amusements, adapted to all classes of the community. It must be borne in mind, that every device which is calculated to lessen the pangs of confinement, to "drive dull

care away," to substitute pleasing thoughts, sounds, and images for gloomy self-ratiocination, becomes invested with an unusual value and importance in the treatment of the insane. Goethe has remarked, with as much truth as feeling: "Nothing that calls back the remembrance of a happy moment can be insignificant." It should be our endeavour, in any and every way, within prudent limits, not only to introduce the insane to the pleasures and pursuits of the outer world, but to carry these pleasures and pursuits into the heart of their retirement. It is a grievous mistake to suppose that, in the insane, the sense of enjoyment is blunted or destroyed. We can bear personal testimony to never having seen more unrestrained enjoyment, more boisterous mirth, more natural and healthy fun and frolic, than in the amusements of an asylum. That such recreations create strong, lasting, and most favourable impressions on those for whose benefit they are intended, is sufficiently proved by the correspondence of various discharged patients. One gentleman, in writing, never fails to inquire regarding the concerts and other amusements, which proved such sources of gratification to himself. Another, engrossed in a most laborious business, occasionally dances away his cares at our weekly ball; and other patients, in revisiting the asylum, generally select some of the amusements as the occasion. Our experience of the regulated admission of strangers to the lectures, concerts, balls, and fêtes, has been most gratifying. The patients have regarded their presence as an honour; they have felt themselves objects of consideration and regard; and they have striven so to conduct themselves as to justify the confidence placed in, and the high opinion formed of them.

'Four concerts were given during the winter, at which sometimes so many as eighty persons were present. There has been a decided improvement both in the style and execution of the music. These concerts have had the effect of drawing from their rooms and galleries, their self-imposed seclusion and morbid thoughts, some who have hitherto been unapproachable, who have kept frigidly aloof from society and its recreations. An indirect effect has been, consequently, to throw more together the various classes of our community, to produce a greater degree of social, friendly, and harmonious feeling among them, and to give them more the characters of a happy family group, than of a miscellaneous assemblage of unruly natures.'

The Report next speaks of the *balls* of the preceding winter and the *Christmas-tree*. Then come the picnic excursion-parties to the various pretty places of the neighbourhood, all of which have given occasion for much 'fun and frolic.' It goes on: 'Athletic sports are liberally encouraged among the gentlemen. To the old favourites—cricket, quoits, and bowls—racing, leaping, and various games of strength have been added. More difficulty has been experienced in providing a variety of suitable games for the ladies, who, however, have recently claimed archery as peculiarly their own. Fêtes champêtres, attended by about fifty persons, were held on the bowling-green, on Waterloo-day, on the occasion of the Queen's passing through Perth, and on the recent Peace holiday. The last-named fête consisted of athletic games, including various forms of running, leaping, cricket, bowls, quoits, and trials of strength; a monster tea-party of about eighty persons, followed by a ball on the bowling-green; and a display of fireworks in the evening. The gentlemen were engaged for weeks previous to the fête in practising for the games, and the ladies in preparing the banners, festoons, and other decorations. The successful competitors are not a little pleased with the discovery of the fact, that in the distances run, the heights jumped, and the weights thrown or carried, they have out-distanced the prize-gainers at the recent military games at Fort George.'

All these things are most pleasant, and let us repeat, they are but a specimen of the practice at the first-class institutions everywhere. In the Edinburgh Lunatic Asylum, one additional amusement strikes us as worthy of special notice—this is the preparation among the patients themselves of a monthly sheet of light literature, under the name of the *Morningside Mirror*. We receive the *Morningside Mirror* constantly, and can testify that

there are books, especially in the department of poetry, now-a-days published by sane people which contain far more absurdity; or rather, many such books are full of folly and frenzy, while the *Morningside Mirror* is a perfectly sober, rational work. On the other hand, the private asylums, to which false delicacy consigns so many patients, are in Scotland very generally in an unsatisfactory state.

THE PHANTOM-HORSE.

THE story is still current in the neighbourhood of the spot on which the Château Beauvoisin once stood, though the affair happened as long ago as 1786.

The Château Beauvoisin was situated about a league and a quarter, or nearly four miles, from Paris, a little apart from the St Germain high-road. At that time, the house was kept in excellent repair, was always used as a residence all the year round, saving for a month or two in the summer and autumn time; and its extensive gardens and grounds were laid out with unexceptionable taste, and kept in first-rate order.

The Marchioness de Beauvoisin, though still young, handsome, and rich, had been three years a widow, and was much given to romantic habits—solitary wanderings and musings about her estate, long evening vigils at her boudoir-window, and other similar demonstrations. As it happened, it was the marchioness herself who beheld the apparition in the first instance.

It was a beautiful evening in that pleasant time of the year when spring is fast merging into summer; sweet light dews were falling, the moon and stars were shining, and the marchioness was at her window, surveying with pensive pleasure the long heavy masses of ancient foliage that gave beauty and dignity to her domain, and now all silvered over and etherealised by moonlight and mist. Suddenly she was startled by seeing something moving with prodigious velocity up a certain lane which skirted one side of the grounds of the château, and conducted from the Paris highway into the rural region. Away, and away, and away—all up the lane, she could perceive a large animal rushing with fearful speed; and yet, though she was certain her eyesight did not deceive her, she could not hear the faintest sound. Raising her eye-glass, she saw, beyond question, that the object of her alarm was a large black horse. There was a saddle on its back, but no rider!—and though the ground was hard and dry, and the night quite still, not the slightest sound or echo could she catch of its hoof-falls.

The marchioness cried out in terror, and her maid, on coming to her side, found her to be in a state of violent nervous agitation. The handsome young widow was indeed in an ecstasy of wonder and affright. She despatched Antoine, the woodman, and the rest of her male servants, in all directions, to make inquiries as to what accident had happened to account for the horse being seen running away, saddled and bridled, but riderless. The people went forth—north, south, east, and west; but without result. No one had heard of any accident in any quarter, and no one had seen the horse without a rider. It was late in the evening, indeed, and the country-people were mostly in their houses preparing for bed; and as for passing travellers, very few travelled the highways at night in those times, save in numerous parties. In fine, every one believed that the marchioness must have fallen asleep at her window, and dreamed all this of the horse without a rider. The marchioness, however, had not been asleep, nor had she been dreaming. She crossed herself with a pious shrug, and half feared she had beheld the Evil One in the form of a black horse.

For a day or two, the marchioness's dream was the joke of the men and maids, both the indoor and outdoor menials of her ladyship; but very soon her strange narration received 'confirmation strong.' Antoine,

the woodman or keeper—Antoine himself, the most hilarious of the sceptics, was the next who beheld the apparition. Only a few days later, he was coming down the avenue or lane towards the château at a late hour in the evening, when he beheld the large black horse approaching him at a terrific pace. Its long wild mane was tossing and flying in the air, and Antoine fancied its eyes shone with a supernatural fire. The bridle was over its neck, and the saddle on its back, but no rider! And what was more strange, more darkly suspicious than all, the horse sped along the hard road in a mysteriously silent manner; its hoofs, in fact, not making more noise than those of a goat. Surely, after all, the marchioness had not been dreaming. They who had discredited her had been the fools.

The honest woodman was stricken with superstitious terror at the phenomenon. Though almost frightened out of his wits, he still looked after the flying horse, expecting every minute to see the earth open, and the creature leap into its stables in Hades, amidst fire and smoke. But the creature went straight on up the avenue, neither turning to the right nor the left; neither rising into the air, nor descending into the bowels of the earth; for Antoine looked after, and watched it as long as he could see even the waving of its ample tail.

After this, there was nothing talked of at the Château Beauvoisin but the phantom-horse; and while the excitement was still reigning in the minds of the fair mistress of that household and her several retainers, Antoine made a special journey of inquiry into the matter, proceeding straight up the village at the end of it, and calling upon all his acquaintances and gossips there. But the whole affair was quite new to them; they had never seen or heard anything about this horse; nor had any one heard of an accident taking place, such as would account for a horse being seen without a rider. As for the said horse running without making any noise, all Antoine's friends scratched their heads amain, and thought that rather too good not to be considered as a joke. Antoine had many a wrestling argument with them on the subject; and as argument is rather dry work, many a cup of wine was drunk while the subject was being discussed. To the latter circumstance must be ascribed the fact, that Antoine did not set out upon his return until the evening was somewhat advanced, notwithstanding that his route lay down the haunted avenue, unless he were disposed to make a circuit of several miles. The wine, while it had tempted him to prolong his stay, had also imparted to him some measure of a hazy, effervescent bravery. He broke away from his cronies with a laugh and a boast, and to all their taunts and jokes about the haunted lane and the phantom-horse, declared that he should be only too glad if he could meet the Evil One himself, for then, perhaps, his dark majesty would be kind enough to explain to him the mystery of the whole affair.

So Antoine set out upon his homeward walk. It was growing dark, but the stars were peeping forth, and it was the time of the new moon, and promised to be an evening at least light enough for one to walk home in comfort. The people were all retiring within their houses. As he passed along the straggling village street, many *jalousies* were closed, and many candles lighted. Notwithstanding the wine, Antoine soon began to think that it was a dreary thing to be out late by one's self, and to wish that the château were not so far away; and as exercise and the increasing cold qualified more and more the dauntless mood in which he had set forth, he began to look forward with considerable discomfort to that part of his journey where he should have to strike into the avenue wherein the equine apparition had been beheld by both himself and his mistress. With every step that brought him nearer to the spot, he grew more

serious, till he might be said to be in a state not far from downright trepidation.

Antoine crossed himself many times that night. When one's nerves become excited, it is astonishing how much may be found to affright in the commonest sights and sounds. The swaying of a branch in the wind, the sighing and murmuring of the air amidst the leaves, gain a new significance in twilight hours, and when heard by ears prepared for alarms.

Thus honest Antoine was in such a state by the time he found himself at the top of the dreaded avenue, that he walked on muttering his prayers aloud and shutting his eyes every instant, for fear that the next step might reveal something horrible straight before him. A dark, dismal-looking house, surrounded on three sides by ancient sombre trees—one of the country-seats of the Du Foinvert family, but very little used as a residence for many years past—stood by the side of the road, a little way down. Antoine passed the gloomy mansion in particular dread, and was just beginning to breathe a little more freely as he cleared the deep shades of its surrounding trees, when suddenly he saw before him something advancing up the avenue with a wild swinging action, which he but too well remembered. It was the phantom-horse! Antoine rushed aside, and stood quaking beneath the trees. The creature came on, bounding, tearing, tossing; eyes shining, mane and tail flying, bridle and stirrups swinging; no rider on its back, no noise from its hoofs. It was gone, past and away, in an instant. Sick with terror, Antoine looked after it, expecting every moment to behold some terrific *dénouement*; but what was his astonishment when he saw it stop right in front of the old house of the Count du Foinvert, and paw at the great wooden gate of the *porte cochère*, uttering at the same time a short impatient neigh! And what when, almost immediately, he beheld one leaf of the gate opened from within, as if in obedience to the summons of the diabolical horse, which thereupon tossed its head and walked in, as proud and confident as a lord entering his own castle! 'The devil has taken apartments in the Château Foinvert!' exclaimed Antoine. 'No wonder the family have not been able to live there all these years past: this accounts for it. This is the secret of the unlucky old house!'

When Antoine reached home that night, he was in such a state as to awaken the lively sympathy of his fellow-domestics, from the coachman to the scullion; and when, after the administration of various stimulants, he related what he had seen, the whole household became suddenly oppressed with the sense of surrounding mystery, and believed unhesitatingly that the world was full of ghosts, spirits, enchanters, and emissaries of the Evil One.

In the morning, the marchioness heard the story from the lips of her own waiting-maid, and was immediately seized with an intense curiosity to know who lived in the Château Foinvert, and what was the meaning of it all; and, moreover, the marchioness, like a resolute young widow, fully believed that nothing in the world could prevent her getting to the bottom of it.

Almost immediately after breakfast she ordered her carriage, and taking with her the coachman, a footman, and Antoine, was driven to the Château Foinvert.

The gates were opened by a groom, who, in answer to an inquiry as to who was living in the house at present, answered: 'No one; but Monsieur the Count stops at the place occasionally, and, as it happens, is here now.'

'Oh!' exclaimed the marchioness, 'I was not aware Monsieur the Count did our neighbourhood so much honour. Tell your master I beg to speak with him a moment on a subject which has given me much anxiety.' The words were hardly uttered, when a very

elegantly dressed gentleman was observed emerging from one of the shaded walks beneath the ancient trees that surrounded the château. He was a personage of a distinguished and elegant presence, and apparently about twenty-nine or thirty years of age. His face was handsome; but in its already sunken cheeks and peculiar pallor, exhibited the ravages of a life of dissipation. Seeing a carriage with attendants, and a very charming lady in it at his porte cochère, he hastened forward.

'There is Monsieur le Comte,' said the groom; and then turning to his master, he exclaimed—the name having been communicated to him by the footman—'Madame la Marquise de Beauvoisin desires to speak with monsieur.'

'Yes, monsieur,' said the lively marchioness, inclining her head as the count bowed low before her. 'I have come expressly to ask some impertinent questions.'

'I shall be only too happy to answer any questions madame may do me the honour to ask,' said the count, politely opening the door of the carriage, and handing the marchioness out. 'Pray, step into my poor house. It is not well appointed, for we seldom come here now-a-days; but, at anyrate, we may find a chair for you to sit upon.'

They passed into the house, and entering one of the rooms opening from the entrance-hall, the count placed a chair by the window for the marchioness, and drawing another for himself exactly opposite, sat down and prepared himself to hear what she had to say, with a gravity which in a slight measure discomposed the marchioness, who all the time was fully conscious that her visit was solely prompted by curiosity, and indeed was rather fearful that some of the questions she intended to ask might be of a somewhat hazardous sort.

'I am exceedingly anxious to know, monsieur,' she commenced, 'who it was that was thrown from his horse last night.'

'Thrown from his horse, madame! How—when—where?' asked the count in surprise.

'Well! that is what I am come to learn,' said the marchioness. 'It was a large black horse the gentleman had been riding, and the accident happened somewhere in this immediate neighbourhood.'

'It is the first I have heard of it,' said the count, looking at his fair visitor with a peculiar smile, which might have expressed a grave surprise, and perhaps some other feeling. 'I am extremely sorry that it is not in my power to afford any information on the subject; but you will forgive the shortcoming when I assure you that I know nothing about it myself.'

'Possibly,' said the marchioness, 'your groom may know something about it.'

'My groom has not been away from the house these two days, madame, and is not likely to know anything of what happened out of doors last night.'

'And your other domestics?'

'Are all in Paris.'

'What! only one groom?'

'Only one groom, madame—as I am here to-day and gone to-morrow.'

'Very well, monsieur. Excuse my questions. I warned you they would be impertinent. The fact is, my servant saw a horse bridled and saddled running up the avenue last night, as if he had thrown some one and run away; and the affair has made me so uneasy that I have not been able to think of anything else ever since.'

'That anxiety does great honour to your kind heart, dear madame,' said the count. 'I can assure you I regret very sincerely that I have not been thrown off my horse myself—so that I might be able to answer your inquiries, and have the honour and the pleasure of your compassion.'

This was spoken with great gallantry, and the marchioness could not forbear a little blush; but she moved restlessly in her chair, as if annoyed at the thought of being balked in the elucidation of a romantic mystery.

'Excuse me, monsieur, for my persistence,' she went on; 'but, as I am informed, this horse, saddled and bridled, but without a rider, stopped its headlong course at your gate, of all places in the world—and that the gate was opened, and he was let in. It was the fact of the creature running hither, indeed, that made me fear some one belonging to the house had met with the accident.'

'It must be all a mistake, madame,' said the count, smiling again. 'Your servant's eyesight must have deceived him in the gloom of the evening. And—a black horse, too—did you not say a black horse?'

'Yes, monsieur—perfectly black.'

'I have not such an animal. I have only one horse here, in fact, at present, and he is more white than black.'

The marchioness flushed: it seemed as if she were doomed to be baffled.

'Well!' said she, rising from her chair, 'there is certainly something mysterious about this affair—exceedingly mysterious; for on one occasion I saw this horse running up the avenue myself; and my servant has seen it twice. Is it not very remarkable, monsieur?'

'So remarkable, that I am altogether at a loss what to say or think about it. But that you may be satisfied that the horse in question is not mine, I will have my Rozinante brought out for your inspection.'

'Three times, monsieur!—is it not strange?' repeated the marchioness with emphasis, looking into the face of the count.

'Sometimes in our lives we find it impossible to comprehend what we see and hear,' said the count with a shrug, but still with the imperturbable smile which the disappointed marchioness found so intolerable.

'However, I am well content to remain in wonder and ignorance, since the phenomenon has procured me the honour and pleasure of this visit.'

'Ah, monsieur, I did not come with a disposition to joke; and I am still inclined to regard these circumstances very seriously,' the marchioness said, as she moved towards the door. 'I shall take some further steps to clear up the mystery, for one cannot endure the thought of such things occurring in one's own neighbourhood, and nobody able to make head or tail of them. Depend upon it, I will soon know what is the meaning of it all, monsieur!'

'Good-luck to your endeavours, my dear madame! and when you have made the discovery, may I ask that you will honour me with a communication; for I also have been very much struck by what you have told me.'

'Still, my good sir, you seem to treat it very lightly.'

'I regard this mystery of mysteries as altogether a piece of good-fortune for myself.'

'For yourself, monsieur?'

'Yes, madame; for otherwise who knows how long I might have remained in ignorance of the most charming neighbour it was ever man's happiness to have.'

'Ah, you are welcome to your badinage, monsieur!' exclaimed the marchioness, moving away towards her carriage with a swifter step, though she could restrain neither a laugh nor a blush.

In the courtyard, on one side of the gateway, she saw Antoine examining, with great steadfastness, a beautiful horse, which the groom was leading to and fro.

'There is the only animal I have here at present,' said the count. 'That, I suppose, is not the one you have been alluding to?'

'It is certainly not the same horse I saw,' said the marchioness curtly, for she was considerably piqued at the thought of her inquiries being all in vain.

'And you, sir,' said the count to Antoine—'is this the animal you saw last night?'

'He's exactly the same size, your excellency, and has exactly the same swing of the head,' answered Antoine, looking at the creature solemnly. 'But he can't be the same, by reason of his breast and legs being white, whereas the other was all over as black as somebody's back.'

'Ah ha! we are all involved in an enigma!' cried the count laughing, as he handed the marchioness into her carriage. 'It is the most surprising thing I have heard for many a day; and I must own myself indebted to your ladyship for the excitement of a new sensation. It is quite refreshing to hear of a right-down good mystery in one's immediate neighbourhood.'

'At one's own door, you might have said, monsieur. However, not long shall it be a mystery: mark my words!' cried the marchioness, with a redoubtable shake of the head.

'Surely I hope not, since you have set your heart upon an *éclaircissement*,' returned the count.

He mounted his horse; and as the charming widow, the Marchioness de Beauvoisin, rode home to her chateau, the Count du Foinvert rode by her carriage, talking gaily, and thanking his stars that the phantom-horse had been the means of making him acquainted with the most desirable of all possible neighbours.

A few days after this the count rode to the chateau of the marchioness to pay his respects to her; and before he went, he was conducted round her beautiful little estate, all the fine qualities of which he scanned with a very observant eye. When he departed, he bade her adieu, saying he was obliged to return to Paris, but should hasten back to the country again as soon as he was at liberty, and humbly hoped he might be permitted to improve further the acquaintance he had been so happy as to make.

Du Foinvert was a handsome and fascinating man, of distinguished family and rank; the marchioness was young and a widow, and life at the chateau was somewhat lonely for her. Very soon after this, the marchioness found herself seized with a strong desire to proceed to Paris also.

As her carriage was proceeding along the Boulevards, she observed a glittering party of gentlemen on horseback approaching, riding on either side, and in the wake of a very sumptuous chariot, drawn by four white ponies. In the chariot was seated a gentleman of a somewhat dissipated appearance, apparently beyond middle life, but still of a vivacious and lively temperament. This was the Duke of Orleans, cousin of the king, and afterwards celebrated as the *Egalité* of the Revolution. These, however, were the days of his luxury, pomp, and insouciant intrigues. On his right hand rode Du Foinvert, on his black and white horse, making about the finest and most interesting figure of the goodly company. The count raised his hat, and bowed low as he caught sight of his charming country neighbour in the carriage. The marchioness smiled and blushed, and bowed in return.

'Hey! what is the meaning of this?' exclaimed the duke. 'Du Foinvert, what have you been about? Who is she?'

'The Marchioness de Beauvoisin—a neighbour of mine in the country, monseigneur,' answered the count.

'A country neighbour come to town,' returned the duke, looking up in the face of his young courtier with a scrutinising glance. 'What! Du Foinvert actually blushes!'

'Not I, monseigneur. It is your fancy.'

'No, no: my eyes are still good; and did I not see that the lady, your country neighbour, blushed also? I take it you are well disposed towards each other.'

'It would become us to be so, monseigneur, since our houses are but little better than a gunshot apart.'

'You are right; and it is well to obey the behests of our most holy religion, which command us to love our neighbour as ourselves!—and especially when the neighbour happens to be a charming young marchioness. But, my dear Du Foinvert, where is her husband all the while?—is he not accounted within the pale of neighbourhood?'

'The lady has not such a thing at present, monseigneur,' said Du Foinvert. 'Her partner is deceased, and she is keeping the shop open on her own account.'

'My dear count, if she has capital, she would make an excellent sleeping partner—that, I warrant, has already had your due consideration. But I should like to see something more of this most amiable marchioness.'

'My lord, I beg that a passing salutation, sincerely respectful on my part, may not lead you to fancy that the lady is to be trifled with.'

'Oh, don't be frightened! You wrong me in your jealous terror, my dear young friend. So far from being inclined to play any tricks, I feel myself warmly disposed to behave like a father to you—like a father to you, Du Foinvert. I see how you are disposed, and will make inquiry into the eligibility of the affair: excuse me, *mon ami*! simply paternal—simply paternal. I am afraid, my son, that, considering how you have been spending money lately, you must be near the bottom of the chest; and in that case the alliance may be advantageous. Confess, Du Foinvert, you have nearly got through all?'

'Never fear, my lord; I can find plenty more where I found the rest,' returned Du Foinvert impatiently—the last words in a somewhat suppressed tone.

'Ah! but that is no reason why we should neglect this promising little affair,' continued the duke. 'In fact, I will send Madame the Marchioness an invitation for our little fête next Wednesday, and the Duchess de Blanverrie shall be her chaperone.'

'I have reason to believe that the marchioness, since her widowhood, leads a strictly secluded life.'

'Only seeing a neighbour now and then, perhaps?'

'I mean to say, she never goes into society; and I am by no means of opinion that she would enjoy anything like the fête we are looking forward to at St Cloud.'

'Be not alarmed, my friend; she shall be humoured most assiduously—most delicately: the sweet widow shall have her very whims respected. Be at rest, and confide in me, my dear Du Foinvert; confide in me, your paternal guardian.'

Du Foinvert did not look by any means pleased, notwithstanding the gracious interest the duke manifested in his affairs. In sooth, he knew his grace far too well to be unable to appreciate correctly the paternal attachment accorded him; and he by no means relished the idea of his versatile patron coming between him and the widow Beauvoisin. When a man begins to entertain a tender passion, he does not feel inclined to allow the interference of an accomplished and powerful *roué*, however fair-sounding the offered countenance and encouragement of the latter. He does not want to be assisted in his love-affair by another, especially when that other considers all the choicest of the sex as fair game, and was never known to be troubled or restricted by anything like a scruple. Du Foinvert, therefore, anatomised with his whole heart the chance that had brought the marchioness and his own acquaintance with her under the observation of the duke; for by this time he had many times cast over in his mind the numerous graces and charms of the young widow, and the solid and substantial assistance her ample fortune might afford in the way of retrieving his affairs, which, to say truth, were in a state of desperate embarrassment and confusion; and in helping

him to begin life again with a clear course before him.

The duke was as good as his word. The marchioness received a polite and respectful invitation to honour the fête at St Cloud with her presence, and the duke's very experienced friend, the Duchess de Blanverie, herself conveyed it to her, with assurances that it would afford her a pleasant evening, and that she, the duchess, would take care that she should not want the countenance and assistance of a good chaperone. What wonder that our young, vivacious, and beautiful widow was dazzled, and that she at once took it for granted that she could make an excellent figure, even amidst the glittering court of the ex-regent!

The appointed evening arrived: the gardens and terrace-walks of St Cloud were splendidly illuminated, and the fine old château itself looked like the palace of a fairy tale—the radiance of myriad lights blazing from the windows. The carriage of the marchioness made one amidst the long train of equipages that were drawn up at the gates. The spirit of festivity was upon the place; the air was full of music, of the sound of gay and hilarious voices—of jest and laughter—of the dainty rustling of silks and satins—of the sparkling glitter of jewels and precious stones.

As soon as the marchioness entered the *salle d'entrée*, the Duchess de Blanverie was by her side, all smiles and compliments. The young widow looked extremely handsome; her dress was unexceptionable, her diamonds unquestionable. The presence of a new beauty in that sphere was always a theme for observation, gossip, and speculation. The marchioness found herself an object of attention, and in some quarters of admiration, and straightway, woman as she was, began to felicitate herself upon her auspicious entrance into the highest society, and to feel interest and enjoyment in all that was going on around her.

She had been a couple of hours in the house, and was wondering whether she should see the Count du Foinvert there, as she had expected, he being one of the intimate associates of the duke; and whether, indeed, she should see the duke himself, for as yet he had not made his appearance in any of the groups through which she had passed. As she was still speculating on this probability, a voice at her shoulder pronounced her name in a low tone, and turning, she beheld the Duke of Orleans himself.

'You are thrice welcome, dear madame, to this house, and I am sorry to remember that we have never had the honour of your presence before,' he said, with a courtly smile and bow.

'Monseigneur is very good!' exclaimed the marchioness.

'I am sorry to hear, my dear lady, of the sad repute into which your neighbourhood has fallen. I hope and trust you may never share the fate to which so many who pass your road have been exposed.'

'Monseigneur, you alarm me!' exclaimed the marchioness, in astonishment. 'To what do you allude? What peril awaits those who pass along our road? I am very rarely in Paris—and thus do not hear the news.'

'It is sad work! six robberies on the highway between St Germain and Paris within the past month, and as yet not the slightest clue to the perpetrator; who, according to all accounts, is a *cavalier seul* mounted upon a black horse.'

The marchioness started and turned pale with terror as a wild suspicion darted through her mind.

'Ah! you may well be affrighted, my dear young lady,' said the duke. 'I hope providence may save you from the wretch, whoever he may be. I have pledged my word, that immediately upon discovery he shall expiate his crimes upon the scaffold. But what is the matter, my dear madame? are you faint? are you ill?'

'Excuse me,' said the marchioness, in great disorder. 'A black horse, did you say? and on the St Germain road? Then there have been robberies? Did I not see that horse myself, and did not Antoine see it twice, and did he not say it went straight to his door? Can it be possible?'

'What do you mean, my dear madame?' asked the duke, exceedingly astonished at the confusion and the agitated words of his fair visitor. 'What horse did you see? and to whose door did it go?'

'Excuse me, monseigneur; the news has so startled me I hardly know what I am saying,' answered the marchioness, seized now with a new terror. 'There were some idle stories of a horse being seen running past my house without a rider—perhaps it belonged to some one who had been robbed.'

'But to whose door did it run, my dear madame? Did you not speak of its going straight to some person's door?' asked the duke, with eager interest. 'Come, come! I am delighted by the hope that you may be able to give us some clue to the villain. Society will be beholden to you, my dear marchioness.'

'No, no! I know nothing whatever—I had heard of no robberies, before your grace informed me but this moment,' said the poor lady, in extreme perplexity and alarm. 'It is all fresh news to me.'

'Ay! but this about the horse without a rider, which you have seen once, and which Antoine has seen twice, and which Antoine says went straight to somebody's door,' persisted the duke impatiently. 'To whose door, madame?'

'I cannot tell, monseigneur—it was late in the evening—the man himself was alarmed, and his statement is not to be trusted. My own inquiries have discovered that he was entirely mistaken—entirely mistaken. Excuse me, monseigneur—I could not, for my life, say a word which might throw suspicion upon an innocent person.'

The duke looked round the salon with an eager glance. 'Why is Du Foinvert not here?' he muttered gravely.

The marchioness blushed amidst her agitation at the mention of that name, and became still more distressed. The duke observed the circumstance, and smiled mischievously. 'Take my arm, my dear madame. I will beg you to accompany me for a few moments.'

He conducted her to a retired apartment, motioning first the Duchess de Blanverie to follow. When they were alone, he whispered some instructions in the ear of the latter, and she retired, leaving him with the marchioness.

'You have dropped some hints—some words, madame, which must be cleared up,' he said with judicial gravity. 'It is my belief you have it in your power to afford us a clue of importance: let me beg of you not to allow your timidity to impede the course of justice.'

'You frighten me, monseigneur! What have I to do with the course of justice? All I know is, that I saw a horse run past my house one night without a rider.'

'And Antoine saw it twice—and, pray, who is Antoine?'

'One of my servants.'

'Bien! he shall be arrested. Doubtless he will be more communicative than his mistress.'

'Oh, monseigneur, he is a gossiping noodle, and his statement is not to be trusted.'

'We can judge of that when we hear what it is,' rejoined the duke drily.

Here the Duchess de Blanverie re-entered the room, followed by six gentlemen of various ages, but most of them young, and wearing the gallant, reckless, and high-bred air of courtiers to the manner born.

'Behold, madame, the victims of the robber!' exclaimed the duke, waving his hand towards these gentlemen with a smile. 'These six gentlemen have

all been robbed within the past month by the mysterious cavalier seal, who rides upon a black horse.'

'A horse that runs like the wind, and makes no more noise!' cried one. 'Four hundred louis the villain eased me of.'

'A horse whose hoofs you can hardly hear when he is galloping close at your side!' exclaimed another. 'A thousand louis am I the poorer, entirely because I could not hear the creature coming after me!'

'Plainly a horse out of the devil's stables,' added a fourth. 'It's my belief the brute has wings. Six hundred and fifty louis, my friends!—no joke to lose.'

And as the 'victims' proceeded thus with their complaints, the agitation of the marchioness increased, for the peculiarity they all alluded to established the identity of the phantom-horse.

'Gentlemen,' said the duke, waving his hand with an inclination of his head towards the marchioness, 'this lady and her servant have, on three occasions, seen a horse running away without a rider, in the neighbourhood in which you were robbed. Her servant saw the animal go to a certain person's door. It is my belief that she may afford us some clue of importance, and I have called you to her presence in order that her pity may be excited, and induce her to reveal all she knows.'

'Did the horse run in a strange, silent manner, madame?' asked one.

'It did—it did; but I know nothing about these robberies, and have never heard of them before,' exclaimed the marchioness, her affright greatly increased.

'To whose door did it go?' cried the chorus. 'His name—madame, his name!'

'I would not cast suspicion upon an innocent person for the world!' exclaimed the marchioness.

'No harm shall befall the innocent, depend upon it, madame. His name, we pray you!'

'We must secure Antoine, the lady's servant,' said the duke, as the marchioness still hesitated. 'Him we will make more communicative.'

He rang the bell, and to the dismay of the marchioness, Antoine, apparently frightened out of his wits, was hurried into the room by a couple of lackeys.

'I have sent for him, you see,' said the duke. 'Now we shall hear something.'

He then proceeded to question the wondering Antoine as to all he knew about the phantom-horse; and at length drew forth the whole of his story—the company learning that the horse had stopped at the country-house of the Count du Foinvert.

The name was echoed in a general shout the moment Antoine mentioned it.

'Du Foinvert! the villain!'

'Du Foinvert! the traitor!'

'Du Foinvert! the cheat!'

'I suspected it must be some one always present at our play,' cried one; 'for whenever any one gained a lucky pull, he was sure to be robbed!'

The duke laughed aloud, delighted by the strange scene of excitement he had brought about.

'Du Foinvert will be here in a minute—I have sent for him,' said the duke. 'Ha! ha! we will put him to the torture, gentlemen!'

Presently the count entered the room with his usual easy and nonchalant air; he started, however, when he saw the marchioness and Antoine, and noted who were present, and the strange looks they wore; but he quickly recovered himself, and with a gay laugh, cried: 'Well, what's the matter?'

'The robber's horse,' said the duke, 'has been seen to run to your house, Du Foinvert—the horse with the muffled hoofs finds his home in your stables.'

'Then you have found me out!' cried Du Foinvert with a hearty laugh. 'You have indeed been very

kind to let me go on so long. The horse is in your grace's stables, now, and his rider is your humble guest.'

'Give me back my six hundred and fifty louis!'

'Restore my four hundred!'

'Return my thousand, count, this instant!'

The victims crowded round the desperate young roué, shouting with rage, whilst he stood in the midst, laughing till he could barely stand.

'Pay back the money!' cried the gamblers—'pay back the money!'

'I have not a liard of it!' cried Du Foinvert, still laughing. 'But I can tell you where it all is—every louis.'

'Speak!'

'Where is it?'

'Let us hear.'

'In his grace's pocket!' exclaimed Du Foinvert, pointing to the duke. 'He won it from me, as fast as I could get it. Take it from him—take it from him!'

'If it comes to this,' cried the duke, 'it is time for me to be off!'

He shuffled away, but the party of gentlemen he had summoned rushed after him, Du Foinvert at their head, vociferating for their money; and thus the chase was continued through all the great rooms of the château, to the amusement and surprise of the company, until the duke took refuge in his private cabinet.

Such was this scene among the reckless gamblers who fluttered in the favour of the ex-regent. The only penalty laid upon Du Foinvert for his desperate method of raising resources was, that he should pay back half of his winnings to those he had robbed, in two annual instalments.

In the stables of his grace were found the muffers of leather lined with wool which had incased the hoofs of the phantom-horse, and the black-lead ball with which a sable hue had been imparted to its white legs and breast. Du Foinvert had no further use for them.

A still more characteristic trait of the times. When the marchioness learned the secret of the apparition, and found that everything was quietly over, she at once gave her hand—and no empty one it was—to the ex-highwayman; and many a laugh she and her husband had in after days at the adventure of the Phantom-Horse.

THE MONTH:

SCIENCE AND ARTS.

If art and science can be promoted by education, the present time should be favourable, for something like a busy movement may now be noted among the circulators of knowledge. Manchester, finding its former Mechanics' Institute too small, has opened a new one, which, having 1600 members and a good library, is self-supporting, and is one of the few institutions of the kind that bid fair to flourish.—A demonstration made at the Oldham Lyceum gave Lord Stanley an opportunity of making a speech on the old but always interesting topic—pursuit of knowledge under difficulties; and what he said might well stir up many to the noble work of self-improvement, were it not for the primeval necessity that stomachs must be filled three or four times a day, and that too many of the possessors of stomachs prefer to be saved the trouble of thinking. They are the best friends of education who are not impatient for results—who do not expect its progress to be as marked as that of our export trade, definable month by month, and year by year, and promising in the present year to double the amount of 1846.

But that what is doing will produce a beneficial effect is not to be doubted. A School of Design is to be established at Coalbrookdale, the place where iron

is cast and wrought into so many tasteful forms. An Exhibition of Art Treasures of the United Kingdom is to be held at Manchester in May 1857, to comprise paintings, drawings, carvings, sculptures, coins, bronzes, &c.: the building to contain them is now being erected. In 1858, we are to have an Exhibition of Works of Art from all the Government Schools of Design. A National Portrait Gallery is now in course of formation. Christchurch Cathedral at Oxford, a beautiful edifice, is being restored, and will henceforth be freely open to the public. The monuments in Westminster Abbey are being preserved from further decay by syringing them with a thin resinous solution, and applying a cement of shell-lac to the loose crumbling parts, so that the ancient form and appearance are preserved, and, as is believed, permanently. To preserve old works of art is surely not less commendable than to produce new ones. Sir Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy, that princely-minded Parsee, who has already given thousands in the cause of charity and education, has now given £10,000 for the establishment of a School of Design at Bombay. Who knows whether in the contemplated Exhibition of 1858 there may not be specimens of drawing and design from pupils in the east that will carry off the prizes?—And now that Professor Owen is placed at the head of the scientific department of the British Museum, courses of lectures are to be delivered on the several sciences that admit of illustration by the collections in our great national establishment. The learned professor himself is to commence in the course of the coming season, and others will follow in due time; and in this way the Museum will be made to subserve the progress of education, not less beneficially than experience has shewn to be possible in Paris. And in yet another way we see signs of educational activity. The authorities of King's College announce, that in addition to the ordinary curriculum, they will, at the end of the present month, open their rooms five evenings in the week, from half-past seven to half-past nine, for classes in Scripture, in Greek, Latin, French, German, English language and composition, modern history, geography, mathematics, arithmetic, drawing, book-keeping, practical mechanics, elements of chemistry, and the principles and practice of commerce. Surely no young men in London need now complain that the means of knowledge are out of their reach; and it is to be hoped that with the principles and practice of commerce, the value of honesty will be inculcated as a prime essential, for outrageously disgraceful bank failures and frauds in public companies have been by far too frequent of late.

The recently published blue-book on the census of Ireland contains facts which, though we notice them but briefly, are well worth serious reflection. In 1841, the population was 8,175,124; in 1851, the number had decreased to 6,552,385; and the decrease has gone on ever since, and is said to be still going on, so that the estimate for 1855 gives six millions only. In other respects, there is an advance: the extent of land under cultivation is largely increased, the houses are better than formerly, the condition of their tenants is better, education is better, and more sought after. From another document, the Report on Public Works in Ireland, we learn that the culture of flax is extending, and in some places superseding that of the potato; and further, that 6700 acres of land were thoroughly drained last year, and a considerable portion 'sub-soiled.'—Signs of improvement were seen also at the last meeting of the Highland Agricultural Society at Inverness, and not least in the implements, which were of Scottish manufacture. And looking at the meetings of agricultural societies in Lancashire, Hertfordshire, and other counties in England, there is abundant promise of food-resources, let the advocates

of pulverisation of soils and of high manuring argue and depreciate each other's systems as they will.

Two most important points are now attracting the attention of practical agriculturists—namely, 'steam-culture,' and 'drying of grain in the bulk.' Of the former of these, more in a future paper; suffice it here to say, that it has a much wider signification, and involves a much more complete revolution in practice than is generally supposed. The latter has this season had additional interest attached to it in many districts, where continued rains have so materially damaged the cut crops left standing in the fields. It might seem a matter involving many difficulties, to obviate the great defect of exposing cut grain to so deleterious an influence; but we are assured by practical men that the drying of grain as soon as cut, so as to prepare it for immediate stacking, presents no difficulties worth naming. The question is not, 'Can it be done?' but, 'Will it pay to do it?' and it is satisfactory to know that there seems little doubt that it will pay. Certainly there can be none as to the great benefit accruing from freeing the grain from damp before storing it up. This alone will materially raise its value. Any plan would serve better than the 'no plan' which at present so generally obtains. It seems remarkable that the mechanical genius of our agricultural implement makers, which has done so much to aid the farmer in all the preceding processes, should at this point—to which all the others are of course subservient—fail in affording him any facilities. The stowing of the crop in good condition cannot, we think, yield to any in importance, and we are glad to see the point, which has always struck us as a deficiency in practice, taken up and discussed by practical men. We cannot here enter into details of the plans proposed; but to those of our readers interested, we would point out a series of articles in the *Journal of Agriculture*, recently published, and to others now in course of appearing in the *Mark Lane Express*, from the pen of Mr Scott Burn, who has devoted considerable attention to the subject.

The Free Trade Congress which has just been held at Brussels, will perhaps in time make agriculture as free on the continent as the League happily did in England. The Society for Rural Economy of Austria will hold their fiftieth anniversary next May at Vienna. The preliminaries are already commenced: there will be an exhibition of the produce, implements, machines, animals, and forest timber of Austria, together with implements and machines from foreign countries. Medals of gold, silver, and bronze are to be awarded.

Experiments have been made at Woolwich and one or two of our southern ports with Mr Wethered's superheated steam. The inventor made it known first in the United States, shewed it at the French Exhibition, and now wishes to introduce it here. The advantage gained is good control over the temperature of steam, and the means of working it at 250 degrees instead of the usual temperature. The superheating is accomplished in a high-pressure boiler, where the steam is raised to a heat of 300 degrees. From this it passes by a pipe into one double the size, leading from the low-pressure boiler of the engine: the two steams meet midway, the low-pressure absorbs the surplus heat from the other, and so becomes more energetic, while its temperature, as already observed, is perfectly controllable. As is pretty well known, many of the gun-boats built to give the finishing touch to the Russian war, were failures, the reason being that at high-pressure the 'priming' of the boiler tubes was so overfull and furious, that to work the engines was out of the question. Mr Wethered thinks he has found a remedy; and the government authorities are applying it, with what success is not yet proven; but an impression prevails that it will be found available.

Mr Bessemer's process, mentioned in our last, is talked of everywhere, particularly in the iron districts. Some of the initiated deny its efficacy, while others shew by direct experiment that it is a triumph. The inventor, as we hear, is likely to realise large sums by the sale of patent-rights. Considering, however, the way in which patents are often evaded, some think that a royalty on every ton manufactured would be a surer reward.—The discovery of iron ore in Exmoor, which we noticed some months ago, thus occurs at a favourable time; and there is reason to believe that the yield of ore will amount to about 300,000 tons a year. There is, besides, an inexhaustible supply of the white carbonate used in the manufacture of steel, heretofore one of our imports from Sweden; and the diggings have been prosecuted with such good results that a village and church are now erected near the spot. So there will be no lack of material to work upon; and the popular mind may now become acquainted with Mr Bessemer's process, for the *Polytechnic Institute* exhibits it every day in an experimental lecture.

Appearances indicate that iron will grow more and more into request—in architecture, ships, and rigging. Wire-ropes are now used at many of the mines in the midland and northern counties; and an attempt is being made to introduce them in Devon and Cornwall. At equal strengths, a wire-rope is lighter by one-third than a hemp-rope, and by two-thirds than a chain: an important fact, especially where mines are deepest. Then we are to have metallic life-boats—pontoons—army-wagons, if the result of experiments made at Woolwich and Rochester may be trusted. The boats, we hear, cannot be broken or upset, let them be used ever so roughly; and the pontoons are models of lightness. And again—the United States Congress have recommended three lines of railway to California: northern, central, and southern, each about 2000 miles in length. The lands granted to the three comprise 131,865,000 acres—a truly gigantic encouragement! What a demand there will be for rails! Then we are to have the often-talked-of railway to India by the Euphrates Valley; the route is to be forthwith surveyed. And there is talk of a railway from Honduras across to the Pacific—161 miles, the estimated cost seven million dollars, and the expectations of a profitable traffic, fair. To say nothing of the trade from ocean to ocean, there are forests of mahogany and other woods to supply timber-freight for centuries. According to a report in the *Journal of the Society of Arts*, the Honduras government 'agrees to give a bounty of fifty acres of land to each unmarried, and of seventy-five acres to each married labourer who shall go to the country to work on the road, and who shall declare his intention of becoming a citizen.'

The Andamans are to be settled by colonies of Malays.—The province of Oude proves to be very rich in minerals.—A scheme is in contemplation for extensive steam-navigation on the Godavery and other rivers of India.—Mineral springs of wonderful efficacy have been discovered near Darjiling and other places in Sikkim.—Mr Oldham is making satisfactory progress with the geological survey of India: his classification of the rocks, distinguished by names derived from the localities, is well advanced. A report thereupon was read at a late meeting of the Asiatic Society at Calcutta.—The discovery of a water-fall in the district of Bonai on the south-west frontier is announced: it plunges down a cliff of red jasper, 550 feet in height.—Accounts have also been received of the ancient city Brahminabad, found in a dry bed of the Indus, and supposed to have been buried by some natural convulsion. It dates from about 1020 years before Mohammed. Skeletons and curious carvings, and emblems of Buddhist worship, have been dug up.—At another meeting of the same Society, a copy of St Luke's Gospel, recently printed from wood blocks in St Paul's

College at Hong-Kong, was presented from the Bishop of Victoria.

A great deposit of copper ore has been discovered in the Dun Mountain, New Zealand. The earthquake which happened in that island in January last was attended and followed by remarkable phenomena. A region near Wellington of about 4600 square miles was raised in some places one foot, in others much more. A chain of ancient rocks was upheaved vertically, and now forms a cliff nine feet high, which can be followed for ninety miles along the tertiary plain of Wairarapa. The land rose five feet at one side of Cook's Strait, and sunk five feet on the other; and in consequence of the subsidence, a much greater portion of the shore is lost beneath the tide at high-water.—The shock observed in Algiers last August, was felt almost at the same time in the Balearic Isles and on the coast of France, as if there were no Mediterranean rolling between.—From a notice of the climate of California published by the Smithsonian Institution, derived from six years' observations, we gather that the quantity of rain is about fifteen inches a year; an intense drought prevails from May to August, as fatal and as much dreaded as in the south of Spain or Algiers, with which countries California has many analogies. Fogs are singularly frequent, caused by westerly winds from the great ocean: nineteen foggy evenings have been observed in July. Fog and dust sometimes contend for the mastery, and the advantage remains as often on one side as on the other; but if the fog wins, it brings cold.—Madeira has lost hundreds of its population by cholera; and hundreds of inhabitants of the Cape de Verde, to escape the famine we mentioned some time since, have emigrated to Demerara.—An iron light-house, 139 feet high, built by Messrs Grissell, is to be erected on the Great Isaac's rock between the Bahamas and Cuba. This rock and the shoals around have long been a formidable hindrance to navigation.—A scientific expedition, composed chiefly of Frenchmen, has left Cairo at the cost of the pacha of Egypt, to explore the Nile up to its sources.—Captain Burton, whose interesting journey to Mecca we noticed in the *Journal*, aided by a grant from our government, is travelling in Eastern Africa, with a view to reach, if possible, the springs of the ancient river.—And a suggestion has been made, that if Dr Vogel were instructed to push for the same fascinating spot, we should learn something of the mysterious interior of Africa from three different directions.—Prince Napoleon, in a communication to the Academy at Paris, tells them he has thrown overboard fifty floats properly charged and labelled, during his voyage in the northern seas, to help on the inquiry into the direction of the currents.—Captain Penny, returned from the whale-fishery, reports that in 1850 a tent occupied by two white men, supposed to be of Franklin's party, was seen by certain Esquimaux to the north-west of Hogarth Sound.

Now that steam-boats are running everywhere across the wide ocean, that distant steam-voyages are becoming mere matters of course, a question arises whether the nation ought to go on paying £800,000 a year for carrying our letters and newspapers overseas. We have found out that it is a mistake to subsidise a foreign power in time of war; why should we subsidise steam-boat companies in time of peace? Let us have free trade in carrying of mails! Our colonies are crying out to be served in the best and quickest way, and their cries must be attended to. A new steam-line is to convey the mails to Australia; and the Canadians ask that their letters may be sent the shortest route to Quebec instead of the longest. The shortest route is to Portland, and from thence by rail across the state of Maine. That Canada will increase in importance, has just been demonstrated by an incident especially noteworthy: a schooner of 387 tons, the *Dean*

Richmond, has just come direct from Chicago in the state of Illinois, to Liverpool, with a cargo of wheat. Think of that! It is a feat which is perhaps the forerunner of a mighty trade with the far west—the granary of the United States. Chicago is 1600 miles above Quebec; the vessel sailed through Lakes Michigan, Huron, and Erie; then the Welland Canal to Lake Ontario, and by river and other canals to Montreal, and so down the St Lawrence. The whole distance to Liverpool is 4470 miles; and the time occupied by the voyage, including sundry detentions, was from July 17 to September 17. It is one that the owners may well be proud of.

M. Maumené's paper 'On a New Process for Extracting Sugar from all Kinds of Vegetables,' published by the Academy of Sciences at Paris, merits attention. The Academy consider the author's conclusions to be highly important, but leave to him the responsibility. M. Maumené says that all the processes at present made use of are bad; for example, from 1000 kilogrammes of beet-root which contain really 100 kilogrammes of sugar, not more than fifty or fifty-five kilogrammes are extracted; and sugar-cane which should yield 200 or 210 kilogrammes to the thousand, gives from sixty to sixty-five only. The fault is shewn to lie in the mode of treatment. Sugar exposed to the action of cold water undergoes a change known to chemists, which prevents its crystallisation. A beet-root dug up and stowed away is a cone of cold water, and the longer it lies the more is the sugar diminished. Keeping it under shelter makes no difference. Manufacturers, however, have to store their stock of beets, as months elapse before, according to the present process, they can be passed through the mill.

The remedy proposed is to crush out the juice at once as fast as the roots are dug up, and discharge it into huge cisterns, and throw in a quantity of lime, whereby a saccharate of lime is formed which will keep undeteriorated for a whole year, and may be converted at the manufacturer's convenience. By adding carbonic acid, or others of similar action, to this saccharate, and treating it properly by evaporation, &c., it gives up the crystallisable sugar which it had held intact, and in full quantity.

Some further light has been thrown on the subject of ozone, which may prove interesting to those who are taking observations of that atmospheric element. M. Scottetun shows that vegetables and water give off ozone during the day, the former by the electrification of the oxygen they secrete, the latter by the electrification of the oxygen evolved. It ceases in both at night. Observations of ozone are made by exposing to the atmosphere strips of paper prepared with starch and iodide of potassium. But another savant, M. Cloëz, demonstrates that this paper can be coloured by other influences as well as ozone. Acid vapours will do it, and exhalations from plants. A discrepancy between observations made in towns and those made in the country, has been for some time noticed. In the country, the paper is always tinged; in towns, it frequently remains unchanged; but should it be exposed near trees, the blue tint forthwith appears. To quote M. Cloëz's words: 'In the Garden of Plants, the iodised paper is constantly coloured by exposure, especially in the neighbourhood of resiniferous trees, and frequently in a very short time; but at the Polytechnic School, where there are few trees, but a dense population living in unhealthy houses, the paper exposed daily to the air, under the same conditions as that at the Garden, has not been coloured once in six months.' Observers in England will therefore do well to remember that 'resiniferous trees, aromatic plants, and all the parts of vegetables which contain volatile oils, act much more strongly than inodorous plants upon iodised paper in their vicinity.' Schönbein, whose experiments and discoveries we formerly

described, says that light ozonises the atmosphere: this M. Cloëz denies.

A great loss has happened to chemical science by the death of Gerhardt. He was professor at Strasburg, and had scarcely an equal among analytical chemists. Those best able to judge say there is no one living able to carry out the work he began. The loss is the greater following so soon after the death of Laurent. Both were young men. It is said they were starved for want of some of that assistance which, now that they are in the tomb, is held out to their families by the French government and the Academy. Science could be aided in no better way than in assuring students whose heart is in their work of daily bread before their health is ruined; and we are glad to know that our own parliament will be enlightened on this point, perhaps in the coming session.

AFGHAN HUMOUR.

WHAT is this handsome octavo, Part I.? A grammar of the Pukhto, Pushto, or language of the Afghans! We thank the author, Lieutenant H. G. Ravertz, and likewise the London agents, Messrs Williams and Norgate; but all we can say, critically, about the work is, that it is very nicely got up, and that the Arabic characters in which the said Pushto language is printed look terribly crabbed. We will give a quotation or two, notwithstanding, and of a very readable kind for a Pukhto, Pushto Dictionary.

THE OLD MAN AND THE DOCTOR.

An old man complained to the doctor of bad digestion. 'Oh, let bad digestion alone,' said the doctor, 'for it is one of the concomitants of old age.' He then stated his weakness of sight. 'Don't meddle with weakness of sight,' said the doctor, 'for that also is one of the concomitants of old age.' He complained to him of a difficulty of hearing. 'Alas, how distant is hearing,' said the doctor, 'from old men!—difficulty of hearing is a steady concomitant of old age.' He complained to him of want of sleep. 'How widely separated,' said the doctor, 'are sleep and old men, for want of sleep is certainly a concomitant of old age.' He complained to him of a decrease in bodily vigour. 'This is an evil,' said the doctor, 'that soon hastens on old men, for want of vigour is a necessary concomitant of old age.' The old man (unable to keep his patience any longer) called out to his companions: 'Seize upon the booby! lay hold of the blockhead! drag along the ignorant idiot! that dolt of a doctor, who understands nothing, and who has nothing to distinguish him from a parrot but the human figure, with his concomitants of old age, forsooth, the only words he seems capable of uttering!' The doctor smiled, and said: 'Come, my old boy, get into a passion, for this, also, is a concomitant of old age!'

UMBSUR, THE JOY OF HIS PARENTS.

I resided at Basrah, said a certain Arabian Yorick, as a parson and professor of humanity, and was one day a good deal amused by a strange fellow, squint-eyed, straddle-footed, lame of both legs, with rotten teeth, stammering tongue, staggering in his gait like a man intoxicated, puffing and blowing like a thirsty dog, and foaming at the mouth like an angry camel, who came up and seated himself before me. 'Whence come you,' said I, 'O father of gladness?' 'From home, please your worship,' said he. 'And, pray, where is your home?' I rejoined; 'and what is the cause of your journey?' 'My home,' he replied, 'is near the great mosque, adjoining the poor-house, and I am come for the purpose of being married, and to beg you will perform the ceremony. The object of my choice is this long-tongued, importunate, hump-backed, scarlet-

skinned, one-eyed, deaf, wide-mouthed daughter of my uncle.' 'Do you agree, Miss Long-tongue,' said I, 'to marry this Mr Pot-belly?' 'Ay,' said the lady (with Doric brevity). 'Then accept, my friend,' cried I, 'this woman for your wife; take her home, cherish, and protect her.' So he took her by the hand and departed.

Now, it happened that somewhat less than a year after this event, they both returned to me rejoicing, and they had hardly seated themselves when my old friend Adonis called out: 'O your worship! we have been blessed with a most sweet and fascinating child, and are come to request you will bless and give him a name, and offer up a prayer for his parents.' Now, what should I behold but a little urchin, stone-blind, hare-lipped, without the use of its hands, splay-footed, bald-headed, ass-eared, bull-necked, not possessing one sense out of the five, and altogether frightful and deformed; in short, a perfect epitome of the qualities of its parents. At this sight I said to them: 'Be thankful for the darling boy, and call him Umsur (the joy of his parents), for truly he has all your perfections combined in himself, and that child is admirable indeed who resembles his parents.'

THE PRISON OF BREST.

Adjoining the arsenal may be seen a vast building of considerable architectural pretensions, to which the Englishman is admitted by merely shewing his passport and entering his name in a book. This is the famous Bagnes, or prison, to which the worst description of criminals are consigned. Though I was prepared for a painful exhibition, the reality was blacker than the anticipated picture. Having complied with the required formalities, I was conducted by a *garde* through extensive passages into a hall about three hundred feet long and fifty broad, furnished with a great number of sloping wooden platforms, about four feet apart, and so disposed as to allow free passage round the room. These form the beds of the convicts, who at night, and when not at work in the dockyard, are secured to them. Those under the heaviest sentences are also chained in pairs. They are attired in a loose red serge coat and yellow trousers. When I entered the hall, they had just been chained to the platforms, and those I saw, with few exceptions, possessed physiognomies of the most forbidding nature. To intimidate and suppress revolt, cannon loaded with grape are placed at the ends of the room, and so adjusted as to sweep the entire apartment. Talking is strictly forbidden; and during the periods of labour, which are extremely long, the prisoners are overlooked by hard taskmasters, who compel them to work without any relaxation. I had seen quite enough; and many hours elapsed before my mental vision of fierce passions chafing in chains became dim. At the time of my visit, the Bagnes contained about 4000 prisoners, but there is chain-accommodation for double that number.—*Weld's Vacation.*

INNOCENT POISONING BY ADULTERATION.

Dr Normandy gives a case in which a gentleman was poisoned without any person being directly responsible for the act. The case was as follows:—A gentleman was taken suddenly ill after eating some double Gloucester cheese, and his medical attendant having with much perseverance determined to trace the poison to its source, did so with the following result. The cheese he found had been coloured in the ordinary way with anotta; the anotta had been heightened in colour with a little vermilion, which in small quantities is a comparatively harmless pigment; the vermilion had been, however, previously adulterated with red-lead; and hence all this mischief. The adulterator had been adulterated; and each person in the series of successive falsifications worked independently of the other, and was not of course aware of the manner in which he was preparing poison for the public.—*Association Medical Journal.*

THE LITTLE ABBEY OF CARENNAC

(ON THE DORDOGNE.)

FROM THE FRENCH OF FÉNÉLOX.

HERE—in God's house of the open dome—

Vigil is kept by the pilgrim-breeze;
Here, from its sun-illuminated tome,
Labour intones its litanies.

For discipline, here is the chastening rain;

For burden, the fruit of the bending tree;

The thorn of the rose for a pleasant pain;

And palm for a costless victory.

Oh! if my vow but bound to these,

'Twere long ere this laggard step grew slack.

O that the wilful world would please

To leave me my flocks, my birds, and bees,

My ivied stall and my hours of ease,

And my little Abbey of Carennac!

Far from the city's guarded gate,

Free from the crush of its silken crowds,

I see the sun in his purple state,

And the changing face of the courtier-clouds.

My thoughts are mine when my task is sped;

My head aches not, and my heart is full;

And the laurels that cumber my careless tread

Are the only ones that I choose to pull.

Away from my friends, I love them best;

Away from my books, no lore I lack:

Here—no longer a flying guest,

With wavering foot that finds no rest—

Truth comes home to this lonely breast

In this little Abbey of Carennac.

Thus, half-hide from the smile of Spring

Under the bough of a blossomed tree,

My single wish is the grace to sing

The praise of a spot where a bard should be.

Sounding clear as the forest call—

Wakening man in the monarch's breast,

Many-voiced as the waters fall—

Speaking to every soul's unrest,

My song should seize with a minstrel sway

You green twin-isles and their busy *bas*,

The hamlet white and the convent gray,

And the lodge for the wanderer on his way,

And thus to my France in my little lay

Give my little Abbey of Carennac.

To journey again o'er the hard highway;

To enter a garrulous, troublesome train;

Uncalled to come, and unbids obey:

To feign its pleasure, and feel it pain.

To float—a straw on an idle stream;

To glitter—a mote by the sunbeam sought;

To walk—a shade in a waking dream;

To strive for nothings where all is nought.

An iron tongue to summon away,

And a rope of sand to hold me back,

Are the call to go, and the will to stay—

Clamorous Duty and still Delay:

O gilded gloom! O green and gay

Of my little Abbey of Carennac!

Fields that teem with the fruits of peace,

Let your reapers reap, and your binders bind!

I cannot flee for a fond caprice

You stony spot to my hand assigned.

To me are numbered the seeds that grow;

Not mine the loss of the perished grain,

If working I watch for the time to sow,

And waiting pray for the sun and rain.

My day to God and the King I lend:

The wish of my heart will bring me back

A few last, lightsome hours to spend,

And to pass with my lifelong looked-for friend,

Through a quiet night and a perfect end,

From my little Abbey of Carennac.

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